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## United States Department of Agriculture,

OFFICE OF EXPERIMENT STATIONS—Circular 72.

A. C. TRUE, Director.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON EXTENSION WORK.<sup>1</sup>

GENTLEMEN: Your committee decided that its first task was to make an investigation into the present status of agricultural extension teaching in the United States. The hearty cooperation of the Office of Experiment Stations of the United States Department of Agriculture was easily secured, and Prof. John Hamilton, Farmers' Institute Specialist in that Office, was designated to assist the committee. The committee thereupon chose him as its secretary, and he has carried on the details of the inquiry. We desire to express our cordial appreciation of the assistance of the Office of Experiment Stations, and particularly to indicate our great obligation to Professor Hamilton, whose thorough sympathy with extension teaching in agriculture, his long experience in work of this character, and his enthusiasm for progress have enabled him not only to place before your committee important data, but to embody many suggestions for the development of the work. Your committee has not hesitated freely to utilize his comments and suggestions.

A schedule indicating the forms of extension work to be embraced by the investigation, together with a list of queries, was prepared and sent out by the Office of Experiment Stations, accompanied by a circular letter signed by the Director of the Office, to about 5,000 persons representing the various organizations from which information was desired.

There was also formulated the following tentative definition of extension teaching in agriculture as a basis for the investigation:

“Extension teaching in agriculture embraces those forms of instruction, in subjects having to do with improved methods of agricultural production and with the general welfare of the rural population, that are offered to people not enrolled as resident pupils in educational institutions.”

The committee also attempted to group in some logical fashion the various forms of extension work which were supposed to be in vogue. Six groups were made, as follows:

**Group A, Farmers' Institutes.**—The farmers' institutes are a phase of the itinerant lecture system classified under Group B, but they form

<sup>1</sup> Presented to the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations at the convention held at Baton Rouge, La., November 14-16, 1906.

so large and distinctive a movement that it seemed wise to put them in a class by themselves. Historically they are the earliest form of organized extension teaching. They have been for thirty-five years the means of disseminating real agricultural teaching. They are supported by large grants of money, are now pretty thoroughly organized, and the institute workers have an association of their own. For these reasons they demand a separate classification.

**Group B, Itinerant Lectures other than Farmers' Institutes.**—Here are listed the lectures and addresses given by members of the agricultural college and station staff and by employees of other institutions, including miscellaneous lectures, regular courses of extension lectures, traveling schools of various types, special railroad trains designed for educational purposes, and addresses before teachers' institutes on distinctively agricultural themes. Various minor endeavors must, of course, also be grouped here.

**Group C, Literature.**—Comprising those forms of extension teaching developed by means of written and printed material. This literature consists of the great mass of regular correspondence about agricultural subjects carried on through the experiment stations, colleges, boards of agriculture, etc.; also the various publications of these institutions, including station bulletins, regular reports, miscellaneous pamphlets, and the like; correspondence courses; reading courses; traveling libraries; and the publication, particularly by educational institutions, of periodicals dealing with agricultural subjects.

**Group D** comprises all those efforts in which the particular emphasis is laid on **object lessons**, or **outdoor practicums**. These include such activities as field demonstrations of various operations, such as spraying; cooperative demonstrations in which, because of the nature of the work, it is necessary to have the assistance of the individual farmer; and cooperative tests, as of varieties adapted to different localities. These tests, by the way, are close to the border line between the work of the experiment station and of the extension department, but are classified here because in many cases they are essentially for the purpose of education and not for the gaining of new knowledge. Educational exhibits at agricultural fairs, made by colleges, experiment stations, etc., and attempts to secure visits of inspection to the colleges and stations by farmers and others interested, where these visits are essentially for the purpose of education, also come in this group.

The above four groups, A, B, C, and D, are intended to include all of those forms of extension teaching in agriculture which belong to universities, colleges, and other departments, agencies, or institutions whose work is distinctively and primarily educational.

**Group E**, on the other hand, was meant to include those aspects of the work of the multitudinous rural societies, as carried out in their meetings and propaganda, which aim to instruct. These may comprise

the efforts of agricultural fairs to introduce educational features; programmes of the various horticultural, live-stock, and other agricultural societies; lecturer's hour in the Grange; village improvement societies; civic associations with rural betterment sections; rural study clubs; boys' and girls' agricultural clubs or institutes, such as the Junior Naturalists in New York, the Nature Guard in Rhode Island, etc.; and agricultural students' unions of various types. Rural societies, in carrying out many of these lines of endeavor, are quite dependent upon the colleges and stations for their material, and oftentimes for the initiative. Nevertheless, the classification is logical, because eventually the work must be fostered and developed through the capacity and persistence of the voluntary organizations themselves.

**Group F.**—It was meant here to outline a field which is somewhat indefinite in character, but one in which the colleges have a part, together with other agencies. It comprises that form of endeavor which attempts to secure cooperation among various rural organizations and institutions, such as efforts to secure joint sessions between other associations, the organization of associations of teachers and school patrons, the formation of leagues or federations of rural societies for rural progress, the installation of a town room as a sort of social center for the town, etc.

It will be noticed that no provision has been made for special or short-course teaching as at present carried on at the agricultural colleges. Whatever may be the advantages from the administrative point of view of listing this work as extension teaching, it was agreed by the two committees that the discussion of short courses belongs to the committee on instruction in agriculture.

It will be observed further that this entire classification is based primarily upon varieties of work to be done, and secondarily upon types of institutions doing the work. It is an attempt to lay out a logical division of the field of extension teaching. Doubtless it may have to be changed in details as our work proceeds. We have here outlined it at some length because of the fundamental necessity of presenting at the outset some comprehensive analysis of the problems which we are set to investigate.

#### RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION.

In presenting the results of our inquiry in as concise form as possible we wish to call attention to the fact that this investigation is but a preliminary survey and must necessarily be more or less superficial. It has, however, been worth while, in order to get into touch with the work actually being done and to secure the proper point of view.

The following table indicates the classes of institutions or agencies addressed, the number of replies received, and the number in each class reporting some form of extension work:

*Results of inquiry into agricultural extension teaching.*

Institution or agency inquired of.	Number of inquiries.	Replies received.	Number reporting some form of extension work.
Agricultural colleges and experiment stations.....	104	52	38
Colleges other than agricultural.....	380	244	19
Normal schools.....	256	60	25
Industrial high schools.....	120	18	15
State and county departments of public instruction.....	1,600	277	123
State and county agricultural organizations.....	1,100	123	54
Libraries.....	900	125	17
Granges, State and National.....	30	12	6
Agricultural press.....	406	30	15
Industrial organizations not agricultural.....	118	15	2
Miscellaneous replies.....		45	3
Total.....	5,014	1,001	317

The column in the table showing the number of institutions reporting some form of extension work is perhaps the most significant result of the investigation. According to this report, there are over 300 active centers of extension teaching in agriculture already established. Doubtless this number would be greatly increased if others had replied. Nearly all the agricultural colleges and experiment stations in the land are doing extension teaching to a greater or less degree, and practically all of the granges and thousands of agricultural societies of various sorts do work that could be called extension teaching in agriculture. But even on the basis of the replies received it is evident that extension teaching has secured a strong foothold in our system of agricultural education.

We shall not take time to specify all the lines of extension work carried on by these various agencies, but a relisting of the forms of extension work actually carried on by agricultural colleges and experiment stations, based on the returns sent in, will be of interest as showing the infinite variety and scope of the work already under way.

Lecturing at Farmers' Institutes.

Holding normal institute schools for institute lecturers.

Providing short course in agriculture.

Equipping and accompanying railway specials.

Assisting at teachers' institutes.

Courses in corn and stock judging given in district centers.

Lectures in district normal schools.

Visiting and lecturing in rural schools.

Holding summer schools for teachers.

Sending out field specialists to give advice to farmers.

Preparing courses of study for agricultural high schools.

Traveling instructors to lecture before granges, farm clubs, etc.

Equipping and sending out traveling "vans."

Correspondence (ordinary).

Preparing and sending out bulletins, reports, and circulars.

Conducting reading courses.

Conducting correspondence courses.

Preparing articles for the public press.

- Sending out model agricultural traveling libraries.
- Conducting and publishing agricultural journals.
- Preparing extension lectures in agriculture for rural schools.
- Conducting agricultural correspondence courses for teachers.
- Organizing and conducting school-garden work.
- Organizing and conducting field demonstrations.
- Holding field meetings for instruction.
- Conducting cooperative experiments in agriculture.
- Providing educational exhibits at fairs.
- Organizing excursions to the college by agricultural associations and by individual farmers.
- Organizing excursions by associations of teachers to the college.
- Conducting field experiments and tests in cooperation with the railroads.
- Conducting experiments and field demonstrations in cooperation with the National Department of Agriculture.
- Conducting experiments and demonstration tests on county poor farms.
- Lecturing in grange halls.
- Lecturing before women's clubs.
- Organizing farmers' clubs, women's clubs, and boys' and girls' clubs.
- Organizing agricultural students' unions.
- Sending agricultural students to judge stock, fruit, etc., at fairs.
- Organizing for conducting nature-study work in the public schools.
- Organizing societies of farmers in each county.
- Organizing agricultural high schools.
- Creating department of extension work in the college.
- Making study of social and economic questions of agriculture.

In colleges and universities not distinctively agricultural almost no work of true extension character is being done. On the other hand, the normal schools are putting forth a surprising amount of effort, although only 25 out of 256 schools addressed reported extension teaching. The variety and scope of their endeavors are suggestive. Not only are these schools giving courses in agriculture as a preparation for teachers to teach nature study, school-garden work, and elementary agriculture, but they are also going out with lectures on agriculture before teachers' and farmers' institutes, are bringing conferences of farmers to the schools, offering excursions by students to farms, giving demonstrations in spraying, etc., issuing monographs on agriculture and horticulture and school bulletins on gardens, and preparing articles on agriculture for the public press. They are also organizing school and home improvement clubs, studying questions of rural sociology, and in other ways putting themselves in touch with the farmers, teachers, and pupils in the rural communities.

It is also interesting to note the activities of State and county superintendents of public instruction. One hundred and twenty-three of these reported some form of extension teaching; and the scope of their work, based upon the different kinds of activities which they are fostering, is gratifying as well as surprising. It would unduly prolong this report to give even a list of these activities. They comprise not less than 55 items of extension effort.

Libraries, State and local, are also entering the field, 17 reporting traveling libraries, lectures, lecture bureaus, etc.

It has not been feasible as yet for your committee to make a comprehensive study of extension teaching on the basis of groups of work. Except in the case of farmers' institutes, few of the colleges and other institutions have thoroughly organized their extension teaching, hence the replies gave very little material for such a study. The farmers' institutes are the most thoroughly organized form of extension work, and the Office of Experiment Stations already contains such full information respecting them that no inquiry blanks were forwarded to the managers of institutes.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

This preliminary survey of agricultural extension teaching in the United States seems to lead to the following conclusions:

(1) The fact that only 6 per cent of all the persons addressed reported extension work of any character shows the field that is opening up in this line of educational effort. On the other hand, the fact that 317 agencies of various sorts are at work is indicative of a splendid beginning, particularly when we add to this the immense amount of farmers' institute work now being done.

(2) Nearly all the institutions are feeling their way. The scattered nature and unorganized character of the work are obvious and significant. Only a few institutions have organized departments of extension teaching. The work thus far has grown out of the needs of the farmers and the desire of the younger institutions to win the regard of the farmers as well as to instruct them. All these efforts have been seriously limited by the financial resources at hand and the small amount of time at the disposal of employees of the institutions. The inquiry also disclosed, or rather emphasized, the well-known fact that the agricultural experiment stations are doing an enormous amount of extension work, not only through the printed bulletins and the mass of correspondence of station officials, but also through demonstrations, lectures, and many other lines of effort. Absolutely no criticism can be offered of the spirit in which this work is done or of the good effects produced, but it may be asked, Why should the experiment station longer burden itself with extension teaching? Why should it not turn over all of the duties just enumerated to other hands, and thus free itself, in time, in money, and in energy, for concentration upon the gigantic problems of genuine research?

(3) Our correspondence has brought out the most encouraging fact that the country people universally appreciate what has been attempted in agricultural education in their behalf, and most encouraging of all is the evidence that the information already given is merely a stimulus to a demand for further systematizing, perfecting, and expanding along

these lines of effort. Apparently also an increasing use is being made of agricultural literature. Extension teaching is one of the chief means of encouraging country people to read this literature. Even the children in the schools are now reading about farming and are taking an intense interest in agricultural study, both in town and country schools.

(4) It seems evident to the committee that the time has arrived for a much more complete organization of extension teaching in agriculture. Only a few institutions have thus far attempted any such organization. But the work is so important, and so much of it, although in a rather desultory way, is being accomplished, that the need of concentrating, systematizing, coordinating, and developing the more important aspects of extension teaching, particularly in our land-grant colleges, becomes clearly apparent.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

Your committee would recommend—

(1) That each college represented in this association organize as soon as practicable a department of extension teaching in agriculture, coordinate with other departments or divisions of the agricultural work, with a competent director in charge and, if possible, with a corps of men at his disposal. This department should take on, just so far as possible, all phases of extension teaching now performed in other ways. Your committee hopes at some future time to suggest a scheme of organization and effort which would be applicable to most institutions. At present, however, it merely advises this initial and all-important step, that of having an official whose chief business will be to foster, to systematize, and to organize for the institution all the phases of extension it cares to assume.

(2) If, in case of any agricultural college, this step is at present impracticable, we would recommend most strongly that the college appoint a faculty committee on extension teaching in agriculture. This committee can be of great assistance to your own committee in further investigating conditions and methods of extension teaching in the respective States. Further than that, each one of such committees should make a careful study of the problem in its particular State, with special reference to the feasibility of organizing definitely a department of college extension.

(3) We request that, if sufficient funds are available, the Office of Experiment Stations print a report, at as early a date as convenient, which shall embody in more detailed form the results obtained in the present investigation through the inquiries sent out by that Office. We believe that the facts collected should be issued in printed form and that this publication should be placed in the hands of the officials of all of the institutions and agencies which are now doing or which ought to do extension teaching in agriculture. To that end we would

advise a large edition of this pamphlet for wide circulation by the Department of Agriculture.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

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Recommended for publication.

A. C. TRUE, *Director.*

Publication authorized.

JAMES WILSON, *Secretary of Agriculture.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 20, 1906.*

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